TAMIL TIMES

WHILE THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY IS IN ALL CASES TO PREVAIL, THE MINORITIES POSSESS THEIR EQUAL RIGHTS WHICH TO VIOLATE WOULD BE OPPRESSION.

- Thomas Jefferson.

VOL. 1 No.5 | 25 PENCE | FEBRUARY 1982

SRI LANKA

CONTINUING POLICE-ARMY TERROR

The Sri Lankan army and the police are at it again. Under the pretext of "hunting for terrorists," innocent ordinary Tamil speaking people are being subjected to uncontrolled violence and terror.

Horrifying tales of people being shot, tortured, hung by their feet, women being abused and made to stand under the blazing sun for several hours and other forms of attrocities have been documented by two independent and imparital organisations, the Movement for Inter Racial Justice and Equality and Gandhiyam. The former is a civil rights movement which had courageously spear-headed the campaign in Sri Lanka in defence of the rights of the oppressed people. Gandiyam is a recognised charitable organisation, based upon the non-violent principles of Mathma Gandhi, which is engaged in the relief of poverty and rehabilitation of displaced people as a result of racial violence.

After the May-June 1981 rampage of Jaffna, a city situated in the northern part of the country where the inhabitants are predominantly Tamil speaking, and the subsequent widespread racial violence that enveloped the whole country directed at the Tamils in August 1981, Mr. J.R. Jayawardene, the President of Sri Lanka promised that no more excesses by the security forces would be tolerated.

Some hoped that the negotiations and the eventual concluding of an agreement between the government and the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), the leading political party representing the Tamils, would result in some form of protection of the people from the excesses by the security forces. But these hopes have been completely belied by the continued and unabated brutal violence and attrocities committed upon an innocent defenceless people.

The news media in Sri Lanka which are mostly either government controlled or pro-government, continue to suppress all publicity to this continuing army and police terror.

STATE TERRORISM ON THE MARCH

FOUNDATION LAID FOR LIBRARY

The foundation stone for the new building to house the Jaffna Public Library was laid on February 7, 1982 by Mr. R. Visuvanathan, Mayor of Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

To be built at a cost of Rupees Fifteen Million the new edifice, nominally the second stage of the noted Indian Architect Narasimha Rao's original plan and still faithful to its architectural style, will be a three-storeyed block with its entrance facing the west. Achitect V. S. Thurairajah who was commissioned to carry out the project has volunteered to do it as a labour of love.

The Jaffna Mayor has made a public appeal for funds. The Jaffna Public Library Trust Fund Account No.2893 has been opened in the Bank of Ceylon, Jaffna. Contributions could be sent direct to the bank with advice to the Mayor.

"HUNGER STRIKE" BY DISMISSED STRIKERS

A group of trade unions launched a "Solidarity Week" at the end of January a part of a continuing campaign to obtain the reinstatement of the dismissed workers who participated in a general strike in July 1980. The government/ of Sri Lanka that strike by the use of emergency powers and the wholesale dismissal of the strikers.

From January 26 to 28, selected dismissed workers and trade union leaders staged hunger strikes in Colombo and other provincial centres. These were accompanied by meetings, pickets and demonstrations which attracted thousands of supporters.

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THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND TERRORISM

"The oppressed has a right to struggle against their oppression by whatever means they choose. Therefore those hypocrites who blabber about the terrorism of the oppressed while remaining silent on State Terrorism are in fact defending the oppressers" so declared the Revolutionary Marxist Party (Sri Lanka section of the Trotskist Fourth International) in a statement issued recently on the subjects of 'Terrorism and the National Question.'

"If there are 'terrorist' groups in the North, then the responsibility for this lies with the present as well as the past governments of this country. Because of the Racist policies of these governments, if some Tamil Youth have become desperate and have come to the conclusion that the only solution to their predicament is to engage in Terrorist Actions, that is not very surprising. The Policies adopted by every capitalist-government that had come to power, have helped to bring about this situation. Many of the policemen sent to work in the North are Sinhalese who speak no tamil. We can imagine the harassment the people in the North have to suffer when they go to a police station to make a complaint. Because we know how policemen normally behave, it is not difficult for us to imagine the situation that would arise when police on patrol duty cannot speak in a tongue that ordinary people can understand. That is not all. Discrimination in allocating funds for the economic development of the Northern and Eastern provinces, the inability of a large number of students to gain admittance into Universities even though they have very high marks, the distribution of land in traditional Tamil areas, not to the landless people of that area, but to Sinhalese who are brought from the South have all increased the discontent of the Tamil People.

POLICE HARASSMENT

"Moreover the harassment the Police and the Army subject the people in the North when a hold up or a Bank robbery occurs is not inconsiderable. Ordering passengers out of buses and subjecting them to degrading searches, sudden raids on homes, making arrests without giving reasons, and holding arrested persons incommunicado, and subjecting them to torture are some examples. If people in the south are subjected to such treatment each time a Bank robbery or a hold up occurs what would do their response to the police and the state?

ON THE SIDE OF THE OPPRESSED

"In that context if there is terrorism in the North, the capitalist governments which had pursued racist policies, should be responsible for this situation. If in this situation CERTAIN ELEMENTS RESORT TO TERRORISM, WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO CONDEMN, THEM. That is the response of the oppressed against State Terrorism and Racist Oppression. We evaluate and determine every issue by standing on the side of the oppressed. If a slave, who is forced to work under the whip lash of his master with his hand and foot tied, kill his oppressive slave master in an opportune moment that is not a cause for astonishment. If a poor trader attacks a thug who constantly demands 'Protection Money' with a sword or a knife that too is not a matter for suprise. In every one of these instances we take the side of the oppressed. We are not ready to treat the oppressor and the oppressed on the same footing.

"We are not ready to equate the violence of the oppressed with that of the Oppressor, and condemn both. A black who directs his gun on white racism, the Palestinian fighter who throws a bomb at the Zionists who have forcibly occupied his motherland, and the Harijan who uses his knife against a high caste oppressor are all liberation fighters who are trying to emancipate themselves from their oppression.

THE MEANS USED IN STRUGGLE BY THE OPPRESSED

"The Oppressed has a right to struggle against their oppression in whatever manner they choose. Therefore these hypocrites who blabber about the terrorism of the oppressed while remaining silent on State Terrorism are in fact defending the Oppressors. If certain sections of the Tamil People are today engaged in Terrorist actions, then our task is not to condomn them, but to constantly struggle against Sinhala Racism which had compelled them to adapt such a course of action; to assist Tamil People to win their rights.

We want to, once again emphasise that we are not ready to condemn Tamil Youth who, in their desperation have tended to adopt terrorism. That in no way amount to the recognition of individual terrorism as an effective means of achieving emancipation. While we recognise the right of the oppressed to choose the means by which they seek to fight their oppression, we well not give up our right to criticise the means they may choose to adopt and to state whether the means they may have employed are effective or not.

INDIVIDUAL TERRORISM

"Therefore we do not think that by engaging in acts of individual terrorism without the participation of the masses, by killing certain political leaders or policemen, it would be possible for tamil people to achieve their emancipation. Often the State utilises such terrorist actions to launch violent provocative acts in order to sow confusion in the mass movement. The line we propose is the line of mass actions - whether they be Satyagraha Actions Strikes or Guerilla Struggles, it is not possible to overthrow this Capitalist Government or remove the oppression in the North through actions which do not have the participation and the support of the masses.

MASS STRUGGLES

"If in a situation like that which arose on 31st May to 8th June 1981, in Jaffna, when certain sections of the Police set fire to Jaffna and began to loot had the masses of Jaffna come out on to the streets and used counter violence against the repression, we would totally endorse their actions. But we are making this criticism not by standing all of from the oppressor and the oppressed or from the camp of the oppressor but placing ourselves firmly on the side of the oppressed. Just as we would express our views on the strategy and tactics workers on strike may adopt, and may oven FRATERNALLY CRITICISE THEM ON OCCASIONS, while giving total support for their strike, today we are expressing our views on the struggles of the oppressed masses of the North, not in order to condemn them but in order to ensure the victory of the struggle of those brothers and sisters who are fighting against their oppression and repression and to resuce those struggles from the clutches of Petit bourgeois and bourgeois misleaders and to emphasise the need to develop them under the leadership of the working class, which in this epoch is the main force capable of defeating oppression and repression.

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MIRJE URGES ACTION AGAINST STATE TERRORISM

Mr. Susil G. Siriwardene, the National Organiser of the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality [MIRJE] in Sri Lanka has, in a memorandum addressed to President Mr. J.R. Jayawardene, concerning the recent violence by the security forces, appealed not to permit members of the armed forces to behave like madmen and urged to take action against those members of the forces who harass and intimidate the innocent public.

The following is the full text of the memorandum sent to the President bythe MIRJE:

The Movement for Inter Racial Justice & Equality wishes to bring to your notice the serious situation that has arisen as a result of the gross atrocities being committed by personnel of the State Armed Services against the Tamil speaking people in Vavuniya and adjacent areas, under cover of State Emergency.

A delegation from our Movement was sent to Vavuniya on a fact finding mission after we received reliable information that members of the Armed Services and Police had unleashed a new wave of violence on the 16th of November 1981, against the Tamil speaking people of that area, under the guise of a hunt for suspected 'Terrorists'. Our delegation spent 3 days in Vavuniya studying the situation and we wish to submit the following facts for your information:

On 16 Novemeber 1981, nearly a thousand soldiers entered an Agricultural Farm in Palamoddai where 11 families of Tamil plantation workers had been settled by a voluntary organisation called 'Gandhiyam' - these workers were among the victims of the recent racial violence in the hill country - The Army arrived in trucks, jeeps and other military vehicles. They harassed, intimidated and assaulted the inhabitants of the village and damaged property belonging to the Farm. Further, having summoned all the women of the village to the Farm, the soldiers abused and threatened them in filthy language and ordered them to sit on the ground under a blazing sun for over four hours.

HUNG BY THEIR FEET

volunteers from the Farm - Sinnathamby and Ponniah - were thrown into the mud of a nearby paddy field, beaten up, dragged into a hut, hung by their feet from a ceiling beam and severely assaulted. The Service personnel behave like an Army of invasion. So serious is the situation that practically all the young women of the village have left in fear.

We are not against the practice of violators of the law of the land being dealth with according to that same law. However, in the same spirit we do not belevie that any democratic government has any right to terrorise innocent people of an entire village in the guise of searching for 'criminals'. The repression and violence perpetrated against the Tamil speaking people of this country by State Armed Forces would ultimately result in not only isolating these people from other communities, but will also endanger national harmony and peace in the Island.

FREED MAN SHOT

On 19 November, in Madhu, about 40 soldiers and policemen shot at and caused serious injury to a youth of 27 named G. Gnanasekaran in the backyard of his home. It was this same incident that was distorted and reported by our National Press stating that a 'most wanted terrorist' was captured in the jungle while attempting to flee. Mr. Gnanasekeram had earlier been taken into custody as a suspect on a murder charge and subsequently released on a bail of Rs.2,000/-. He was shot within a range of 10 - 15 feet!

Why was it necessary, in this case, to shoot with a range of 15 feet, seriously injure and capture a person who had been granted bail and released from Police custody on the orders of a Court of Law? It is an accepted principle that a person is presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty by a Court of Law. It is both brutal and cowardly to force a man to run and then to shoot him.

MADMEN IN UNIFORM

We are bringing these facts to your notice since you are also the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of this country. We appeal to you to please not allow members of the Armed Forces to behave like madmen without control or discipline. We further appeal to you to take necessary steps to investigate these incidents and take necessary action against those members of the Services who harass and intimidate the innocent public.

We further wish to emphasise the urgent necessity to lift the State of Emergency which gives unlimited and uncontrolled power to the Armed Forces and the Police.

It is also our wish that you will honour your public statements to the effect that it is your determination to see that peace and harmony prevails among all Sri Lankan people.

Thanking you,

Signed
Susil G. Seneviratne
National Organiser - MIRJE

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON SRI LANKA 1981

Amnestly International was concerned about the wide powers of arrest and detention under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and about people arrested under its provisions and held incommunicado. The fate of three Tamils who "disappeared" in 1979 has still not been clarified.

A major development in 1980 was the government's decision to sign and ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The government acceded to the covenant on 11 June 1980 and made a declaration under Article 41 of that covenant recognizing the competence of the Human Rights Committee to hear interstate complaints about violations of the covenant. On 3 June 1980 Amnesty International cabled President J. R. Jayawardene welcoming the government's decision. In a letter of 17 September 1980 Amnesty International expressed the hope that this important initiative would be followed by an early decision to ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as Amnesty International had recommended in its memorandum submitted to the government in May 1980. The government has not yet ratified the Optional Protocol.

Amnesty International said it was encouraged to note that the Proscription of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and Other Similar Organisations Law had lapsed in May 1980, a law which Amnesty International had criticized. It expressed concern however that the PTA remained in force, which similarly suspends legal safeguards. Several arrests were reported under the PTA, which allows for detentions without trial for up to 18 months "in such place and subject to such conditions as may be determined by the Minister". Under the PTA detainees need not be produced before a magistrate within 24 hours of arrest as is the normal rule, and there are no safeguards against incommunicado detention. Detainees have been denied any access to their lawyers and relatives for long periods.

On 5 June 1980 several opposition parties and trade unions organized a demonstration to protest against rising living costs exacerbating the earlier cut in the food subsidy program. Pro-government unions organized a counter-demonstration, and one man died in the ensuing violence. On 16 July the government imposed emergency rule and invoked the Public Security Act. It banned the general strike called by the Joint Committee for Trade Union Action for 18 July and then dismissed 40,000 public sector employees who went on strike nevertheless. Officials said opposition parties had planned the general strike to overthrow the government and obstruct its development programme. Opposition sources claimed that 150 people were arrested, but all were released shortly afterwards.

On 8 August 1980 opposition parties and trade unions demonstrated in Colombo Fort against the dismissals of workers who participated in the 18 July general strike. The demonstration ended in violence and the police arrested 32 trade union leaders and left - wing political leaders. On 17 September 1980 Amnesty International wrote to the President asking the government to confirm that the arrests made under the emergency imposed in July 1980 had been short-term and that those arrested were being released. It expressed concern about reports that some might face trial under the Emergency Regulations, despite the fact that the emergency had been allowed to lapse on 15 August.

Amnesty International later learned that all those arrested had been released within two months of their arrest except G.I.D. Dharmasekera; the General Secretary of the Lanka Democratic Front. Amnesty International has not been able to establish under what legislation he was being held and what the specific charges were against him. It is investigating his case.

Thirty members of the Tamil minority were reported to have been arrested in April and early May in conncetion with an armed robbery at Neerveli in the northern region on 25 March 1981. Two policemen were killed in the incident. Amnesty International wrote and cabled to President Jayewardene on 30 April 1981 to verify reports of the arrests and to urge the government to meet the minimum standards laid down in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. While acknowledging that those responsible for violent incidents should be brought to justice, Amnesty International expressed concern that the arrested people were apparently held incommunicado do, and that relatives were not informed about their whereabouts. It stressed that the removal of safeguards against incommunicado detention by the PTA facilitated human rights violations. Amnesty International named seven people reportedly arrested and asked the government to publish the names of all those arrested, to allow them immediate access to a lawyer of their choice, to inform the relatives of the place of detention and allow them immediate and regular visits to the prisoners. It urged the government to puolish the charges against the 30, or release them.

The effective provision of minimum legal safeguards to detainees was one of the main concerns outlined by Amnesty International in its memorandum presented to the government on 23 May 1980. The memorandum dealt with events in the northern Jaffna region after the declaration of an emergency on 11 July 1979.

(Contd. On Page 9)

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CURRENT TOPICS BY SHANTHI

SLEP EXPULSIONS AND TULF

The court room battle resulting from the split in the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) has moved into the arena of Parliament, where MPs belonging to one faction are seeking to obtain the expulsion of those belonging to the other.

The SLFP(S) - Mrs. Srima Bandaranaike's faction - recently expelled four MPs, Maithripala Senanayake, Anura Bandaranaike and two others from the party, and subsequently petitioned to the Speaker that they be expelled from Parliament as MPs in view of their expulsion from the party. Under the unique provisions of the Sri Lankan Constitution, a MP., who is expelled from the party on whose ticket he was elected would automatically lose his seat unless Parliament otherwise decides by a majority vote.

Presently the matter stands referred to Select Committee which is to inquire into and report on the question of their expulsion. One of the MPs nominated to serve in this Committee is Mr. P. Soosaithasan, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) MP for Mannar.

It is reported that the TULF has instructed Mr. Soosaithasan to abstain from attending the sittings of the Select Committee. The main reason for this move would appear to be that the TULF does not want to get involved in what they regard as a domestic dispute within the SLFP. They would prefer to adopt a policy of strict neutrality as they consider that both the factions of the SLFP are of equal importance to them.

LANKA NATIONAL FRONT

The enforced resignation of Dr. Neville Fernando, United National Party (UNP) MP for Panadura has resulted in the emergence of a new Panadura has resulted in the emergence of a new political party in Sri Lanka - Lanka National Front.

Disgruntled, opportunist and the more racist sections within the UNP are reported to be backing the new party which is expected to follow an extreme racist and anti-Tamil policy. They are said to be united in one issue - no concessions to the Tamils. Not surprisingly, therefore, the name of the new party is similar to its racist twin in the UK, the National Front.

The leading light in the Lanka national Front is Dr. Neville Fernando who, readers will recall, moved the infamous 'no-confidence' motion against the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. A. Amirthalingam, in July 1981. In doing so he became an instant "Sinhala Hero'. When the Sri Lanka Freedom Party MPs walked out during the debate on his motion, Dr. Fernando shouted, "If you have a single drop of Sinhala blood, you will wait inside the House." Reliable sources deny that there is any truth in the story that because the name "FERNANDO" smacks of a Portuguese connection, the learned Doctor is preparing to submit himself to a blood test before a panel of reputed medicos to disprove the suspected Portuguese connection, but he is somewhat saddened by the medical opinion he has received to the effect that the result of such a test would not eliminate the possibility of his possessing at least a drop of Tamil (particularly South Indian) blood, and therefore he has given up the idea of the blood test.

To come back to the new party, speculation is rife in knowledgeable circles that Mr. Cyril Mathew, who is a Cabinet Minister, is not totally unconnected with the new party.

The resignation of Dr. Fernando as MP has created another headache for the UNP leadership. Under the Constitution, had he been expelled from Parliament, the UNP could have appointed an MP in his place without having to face a by-election. But his resignation before the expulsion vote was taken has raised doubts as to the legality of appointing another MP. Thus a by-election at Panadura is on the cards, but the UNP High Command is said to be deeply worried about the probable outcome in view of its "popularity" rating in the country.

THE FILM ACTOR POLITICIAN

Mr. Anura Bandaranaike and Mr. Vijaya Kumaratunga are brothers-in-law, the latter having married the former's sister. The former is a politician by inheritance and latter is just a film actor, currently playing the role of "Jesus Christ" in the Sinhala film "Jesus". But the split in the SLFP has brought about a split between the brothers-in-law.

Speaking at a recent meeting. Anura disparagingly referred to Vijaya as a "part-time politician who spent two days on political platforms and 28 days on film sets." But it is rumoured that Vijaya entertains a strong belief that if Mr. M.G. Ramachandran, the famous Tamil film actor, can make it to become Chief Minister of Tamiland, he too could one day become Minister of Sri Lanka. "After mum-in-law, my turn" would appear to be his current slogan.

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THE RELUCTANT POLITICIAN

"Our Prime Ministers are not groomed, they are elected" said Mr. Rajiv Gandhi in reply to a journalist's question whether he was being trained for the job of Prime Minister.

The build-up of Rajiv Gandhi, the elder son of the Prime Minister Indira Ganhdi, is gathering momentum in India.

Rajiv stepped into politics after the tragic death of his younger brother Sanjay who was at one time held to be the most powerful non-offical political figure in India and was tipped for high office in time to come. Rajiv initially was a reluctant politician but now is reported to be enjoying the role. Ther is no doubt that he is the most influential politician in the country net to Mrs. Gandhi. He is as yet not wedded to any specific indeology and the recent canvassing for a parliamentary seat appears to have convinced him of the value of direct appeal to the silent, suffering masses of the Indian people.

However, the build-up of Rajiv is going on at such a pace that one reader of a newsmagazine despaired that in India a leader is chosen first and then all the qualities of leadership are grafted on him. Another reader wished that if Rajiv were to become the Prime Minister, let him be as unlike as Mrs. Gandhi as possible.

THE 100,000 DIRECTIVE

The government of Sri Lanka loses no time in boasting about its open-door economic policy and employment-oriented development projects.

However, a recent Cabinet directive to the Minister of Labour instructs him to somehow find at least one hundred thousand jobs in Middle East countries before the end of 1983 - this being the year when the general elections are due.

(contd. From P. 2)

"Whatever may be the tactics and strategy the people in the North may adopt in their struggle, and whatever view we may express regarding the effectiveness of such tactics and strategies, we want to stress that we will always stand on the side of the masses who suffer racist oppression. We will never endorse racism which the capitalists and their hangers-on seek to use in order to divide the working class and their allies. We dedicate ourselves to the task of destroying racism which is a social disease. Sinhala workers will never be able to achieve their own emancipation without destroying Sinhala racism which is the Syphillis affecting the working class movement."

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GOVERNMENT'S DEATH-WISH

The discrimination suffered by the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka is demonstrably made clear by the absence of any industrial or other economic development in the Northern or Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka where the majority of the Tamil people live.

The only two factories worthy of some mention the Cement Factory and the Paranthan Chemical Factory were established in the North in early 1950s. Any development project that took place in the Eastern Province was accompanied by large scale state aided colonisation of the area by people belonging to the majority Sinhala community.

The authorities would seem to have embarked on a deliberate policy of ruining or killing the Paranthan Chemical factory.

The workers of the Paranthan Chemicals Corporation have been on strike for the last three months without any sign of settlement up-to-date.

The background to the present strike originated in the early part of 1980, when the workers through their trade union protested against the establishment of a second Chemical factory at Embilipitiya (in the south of the country) fearing the gradual running down of the Paranthan factory and its inevitable closure.

The government had spent a considerable sum of money to have a comparative feasibility study done on either the expansion of Paranthan or the installation of a new factory at two proposed sites, Embilipitiya or Sapugaskande in the South, by a British Consultant firm, Warner and Cramer. The consultant's report had emphasised the definite economic advantage in expanding the factory at Paranthan over starting a second factory at Embilipitiya. The report also had emphasised the definite economic advantage in expanding the factory at Paranthan over starting a second factory at Embilipitiya. The report also had said that Parantha , in absolute terms would be the best choice out of the three sites even without taking into consideration the factory that is already there.

The trade union later discovered that the Ministry had decided to ignore the recommendation of the consultants since other 'policy' matters had to be given priority. Warner and Cramer being informed of such 'policy' matters, were asked to submit a supplementary to their final report dealing with only Embilipitiya site, without reference to either Paranthan or their previous comparative study. But even in their supplementary report, the consultants emphasised the much higher potentialities of expanding Paranthan.

In spite of the government's own consultants' recommendation, the government would appear determined not to expand the Paranthan Factory and build the second one at Embilipitiya.

Is it not true that the reason for not expanding the Paranthan Facotry in accordance with the consultants' advice is because it is situated in an area where the majority of the people who live are Tamil speaking?

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Eelam Independence Day?

"The action of declaring a day of Independence for Eelam and of calling for celebrations, by persons not directly involved in the liberation struggle and not closely associated with the liberation movement, is not only ridiculous but also ridicules the sufferings and sacrifices of the real freedom fighters". So states a group of Tamil youth expressing their opinion through the Tamil paper 'POTHUMAI'. They were commenting on the call by the London - based Tamil Co-ordinating Committee to consider 14 January 1982 as Eelam Independence Day. The statement continues:-

"A progressive movement should serve the masses by understanding them well. To correctly express the needs of the people the progressive movement should conduct all its activities among the masses. Without exception it should call on all the expertise available among the masses. At every stage it should test its contact with the people and check the viability of the relationship between the movement and the people. It expresses the needs of the people while educating them. It guides the activities of the masses along correct political lines to eventual liberation.

"Those who do not follow the above advice of Lenin but act impulsively and irresponsibly only damage the cause of the people of Eelam. The day of liberation of the people of Eelam, including the plantation workers, is approaching. The force of the people will overcome all obstructions and win. Eelam will be free of oppression and exploitation and there will be celebrations. That will be a true and happy celebration and not a sham one."

The above extracts are a translation from 'POTHUMAI' a Tamil Journal published by a section of the Tamil youth movement.

THE THAMIL ASSOCIATION OF BRENT

THE THAMIL ASSOCIATION OF BRENT, RUN BY THE RESIDENTS AND STUDENTS OF THE BOROUGH OF BRENT, WILL BE CELEBRATING THE THAMIL HINDU NEW YEAR FOR THE THIRD YEAR IN SUCCESSION ON SATURDAY, 17th APRIL 1982 AT ANSON HALL, ANSON ROAD, LONDON N.W.2. UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF DR. S. THANABALASINGHAM.

THE ASSOCIATION HOPES TO ADOPT A FORMAL CONSTITUTION AT A MEETING TO BE HELD AT 4.30 p.m. ON THIS DATE. THE PROCEEDINGS WILL BE IN THAMIL AND ALL INTERESTED ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS MEETING WHICH WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A VARIETY ENTERTAINMENT AND DISCO.

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REPORT ON ARMY BRUTALITY

Rev. Jayasiri Peiris and Rev. Dr. D.J. Kanagaratnam, in a report documenting the extent of the intolerable violence and suffering to which the people have been subjected to by the armed forces of Sri Lanka have appealed to "all leaders of people and organisations which strive for justice" to "raise their voice and take action to stop the unlimited and uncontrolled power given to the armed forces and police."

The following are extracts from their report dated January, 1981:

The army and police attacks and harassment of innocent people in the Vavuniya District which began in November 1981 continue unhindered in the New Year in spite of several protests. On the 16th of November a large battalion of soldiers attacked an agricultural farm in Palamoddai, harassing, intimidating and assulting innocent people engaged in farming. On the 19th of November there was another attack at Periyathambanai near Madhu where two youths were shot and killed. The people of the area still live in fear and terror after army and Police attacks and harassments. There were further attacks on people engaged in farming on the 7th January 1982 I along with the Rev. Jayasiri Peiris who was my guest during that time made a quick visit to all the villagers attacked at Maniyarkulam Kallaru, Ganeshapuram (Sevidankulam and Koolankulam on the 7th evening and 8th morning. What is reported below is what was seen and heard from the people who suffered from the attacks.

TERROR IN THE EARLY DARK AND SEX WHISPERINGS

'We are told that a very large battalion of soldiers including Police and C.I.D. attacked the villagers of Maniyarkulam, Kallar, Ganeshapuram and Koolankulam in the dark between 1 a.m. and 2 a.m. on the 7th January. Every house was searched people harassed and brought to a central place, questioned, further abused, insulted and harassed. The people who understood Sinhala heard the filthy sex utterances and references made regarding the young girls and volunteer workers in the villages.

VICTIMS POOR REFUGEES

The saddest aspect of the attacks is that the victims were Hill country Tamil plantation workers who suffered tremendously in recent racial riots and came as refugees to settle down in Vavuniya. They had begun their new life with hope, clearing jungle, building homes and cultivating their garden plots inspite of several hardships. The Soldiers and the Police mercilessly ran over by foot and truck and destroyed the plantations on which these poor people depend for their livelihood. The people were pulled out from their homes in the dark, harassed and questioned till evening without break-fast and lunch. The soldiers wer provided food by Helicopters. After the attacks the people looked dehumanised and mentally tortured and spoke to us with tears, showing signs of fear and mental agony.

ATTACKED ON CENTRES AND VOLUNTEER WORKERS OF "GANDHIYAM"

The Vavuniya Gandhiyam Movement is the one and only Organisation helping these poor people in the Villages who are the poorest of the poor. It has centres with dedicated Volunteer workers working to improve the social economic, cultural and educational conditions of these people. In the utter darkness of their miserable lives they look upon Gandhiyam as the only glimmer of hope for a better life. The women volunteer workers, Misses. Sutadevi and Anjaline Mary at Maniyarkulam were harassed, questioned, threatened and abused in a very crude manner. Joesph Antony Balan, male volunteer of the same centre were badly assaulted and suffered deep pain. Miss. Karunadevi of Koolankulam centre was very badly harassed and taken to custody. She was taken to Vavuniya Police station and kept there whole night. Mr. Raveendran of the same centre was also harassed and arrested and taken to the army camp. Chelliah and his brother of Caneshapuram centre were also severely assaulted. The mental agony and physical pain which these two dedicated workers had undergone, cannot be adequately described in words. It is a subjective non-verbal experience of agony.

TAMIL NATIONALISTS OR TAMIL TERRORISTS?

They say in a desperate search for Tamil terrorists and thieves, army and Police are hunting down all Tamil Nationalists. This is a terrible mistake. Everything that smacks of Tamil nationalism is abused and insulted very crudely by the soldiers and pride which any people feel about their language culture and aspirations. One cannot ignore the stark fact that recent history, events and happenings in this Island have in a great way contributed to deepen the national feelings of a very large majority of Tamil peoples. Under the pretence of arresting "Tigers" and "Terrorists" Tamil people and youth showing any signs of Tamil National feeling have been harassed abused, arrested and tortured in many places.

U.N.P. PROPAGANDA MEETING

The army and police are reported to have had a U.N.P. propaganda meeting with some villagers at Koolankulam threatening the people at the point of the guns they were forced to denounce "Gandhiyam" to raise hands to burn down Gandhiyam centres and to support the policy of the U.N.P.

The report is sent with earnest hope that all leaders people and Organisations which strive for justice in our country will raise their voice and take action to stop the unlimited and uncontrolled power given to the armed forces and Police in this country.

Mission House
Vavuniya
9.1.82

Sgd. Rev. Dr. D.J. Kanagaratnam
Vicar
Rev. Jayasiri Peiris

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EDUCATION "REFORM" IN SRI LANKA

BLACK CORE OF WHITE PAPER

BY A. VAIDIALINGAM
Emiratus Principal, Urumpirai Hindu College, Sri Lanka.

The government's 28-page document (with seven additional pages of introduction) on 'Educational Proposals for Reforms" has been called a "White Paper."

The title is a misnomer. For the essential core of the proposals made is black.

It is a class-biased document which clearly reflects the main aims of the UNP (United National Party) government in the field of education. These are:

[a] to undermine the Free Education Scheme:

[b] in accordance with the requirements of the World Bank, to reduce state expenditure on education;

[c] progressively to shift sectors of education, now under state control, back to the private sector;

[d] to restrict the opportunities for education, especially higher education, by discriminating against the children of workers, farmers and lower middle-class employees, as well as those of the national minorities; and

[e] to curtail the influence of teachers' trade unions, as part of its general anti-trade union policy.

SUMMARY

The so-called White Paper is a summary of reports prepared by three Committees that the UNP government set up to report on educational reforms.

One deals with general education, the other with Technical Education, and the third with National Apprenticeship Training. The report of a fourth committee, on Religious Education, has not been finalised or received as yet.

To start with, the Minister of Education and Youth Affairs who sponsored the White Paper, called for a "national debate" on it. But as most of the seminars, discussions, and articles have been extremely critical, the Department of Education has been instructed to deploy officers throughout the country to "educate the masses" on the merits of the proposals which they have failed, up to now, to see.

But even this last minute and last ditch effort will not help the government to get the people to accept its reactionary proposals.

GENERAL EDUCATION

In dealing with general education (i.e. the schools system), the White Paper does mention some defects.

But these are more in the nature of administrative short-comings rather than fundamental ones.

For instance, although we have had free education for four decades and now have three separate Ministries to manage our educational system, the authors of the White Paper pay scant attention to the glaring disparities within this system or to the fact that large numbers of children are denied even the most elementary benefits that the system provides.

Apart from the private schools which stay outside the state educational system, within the state scheme itself the distinction between a handful of 'elite' schools and the mass of other schools has become more pronounced.

Or again, despite free education, the rate of enrolment to schools has been declining steadily since 1960.

According to recent research, nearly one child out of every three in the 6 to 11 year age group does not enter the school system at all, while the drop-out rate is alarming, with only 40 per cent of children who enter school completing the full period of compulsory education.

The miserable position of the estate schools and the tens of thousands of children of estate workers who attend them remains unchanged.

Yet without suggesting any remedies for these basic deficiencies, the White Paper concentrates on how to reorganise the administration of the 9,500 odd schools in our school system in such a way as to reduce state expenditure on education by whittling down even the limited opportunities now available to school-children.

TRIPLE DIVISION

The basic re-organisation suggested in the White Paper is a division of schools into three categories - private, unitary and school "clusters".

In this way, it seeks not only to retain the discrimination between schools that now exists within the free education system but also to give de jure status to a de facto situation.

The private schools, which opted out of the free education system and continue to educate the children of the rich on a fee-paying basis, will carry on regardless.

The elite schools within the free education scheme will now be called "unitary" schools. The only change proposed is that they will be required to manage with less state funds.

It should be noted, that it is not only the elite "unitary" schools that will be called upon to manage with less state funds, but all schools in the free education system.

This is disguised in high-flown phrases about all schools being "encouraged to move towards greater self reliance" and to "shoulder their responsibilities."

What this in fact means is that parents will be increasingly called upon to "contribute" towards the running of the state schools through various devices like "building funds", etc., and that the children of those parents who are financially able to do so will receive preferential treatment.

This will bring an end to even the few children from poor families who were able to creep into some of the elite schools through the free education scheme.

The nightmare of many upper crust families that their children will have to study in the same class at elite schools like Royal College with the children of their chauffeurs will now be dispelled-thanks to the UNP.

PRIVATE SECTOR

In the case of the mass of parents, whose children will continue to attend the second-grade schools which will now be organised in "clusters", they will also have to dig their hands deeper into their almost empty pockets in order to ensure that their children get at least a basic education.

However, the White Paper does not just put the burdens of supporting the "free" education schools from their own pockets on them alone.

In keeping with the UNP's overall policy of giving the "private sector" its due place, this sector will also be encouraged to intervene in the educational process-presumably in a similar way to which private firms in the city of Colombo now help out the Municipal Council, by taking over the management of the roundabouts!

All this amounts to an attack on the free education system and even the meagre benefits that the poorer sections of society gained from it.

The parents and, of course, the private sector will be asked to bear the cost of this "self-reliance" apart from the salaries of teachers and school staffs and, as long as they last, the one or two free school-books and the bun or leafy-porridge that children in some schools get.

CORE AND CLUSTER

CLass Class bias is also patent in the White Paper's proposals about the mass of schools other than the elite "unitary" ones.

For better administration, these are to be grouped in "cluster. But within the clusters there will be "core" schools (the better ones) and "other schools".

The educational system will thus reflect the social stratifications of class society and keep the have-nots in their place.

Parents of children who cannot afford to get about the "other schools", or "normal" schools as the White Paper sometimes calls them, should be thankful for what they get and not try to be over-ambitious and compete with their betters!

(Contd. On Page 9)

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GOVT. RETREATS IN THE FACE OF HOSTILE DEMOS

Widespread demonstrations throughout Sri Lanka by thousands of students and teachers against the government's proposals for the "reform" of education in the country [see article on page 1] have compelled the government to "reconsider" the whole question.

From January 20 to 22, coinciding with the debate on the White Paper in Parliament, students of all eight universities, 200 secondary schools, Medical and Technical Colleges launched a campaign against the government's proposals. The forms of protests included picketting demonstrations, mock funerals, bonfire, posters, boycotts of lectures, meeting and seminars.

As expected, the most militant opposition to the government's proposals was demonstrated in Colombo where over two thousand students surrounded the Parliament on January 21 carrying placards and shouting slogans. They were dispersed with brutal force by mounted and dismounted police, using batons, leather belts and even horsewhips. It is reported that over 30 students were injured and several arrested.

The provisions of the Public Security Act were brought into operation and the armed forces were used to disperse and contain the demonstrations and protests in different parts of the country.

(Contd. From. P. 3)

HIGHER EDUCATION

The same considerations permeated the White Paper's proposals about higher education.

For many years, successive capitalist governments have tried to restrict entry into higher education to a selected few. This was done, in general, through various "quota" systems and through devices like "standardisation" which have both class and racist tinges.

The White Paper goes along with the policy of "freezing" both the number of universities and admission to them. Even there they do not advocate "merit and aptitude" as the main criteria for admission instead of the discriminatory practices that now exist.

However the White Paper does express concern about the frustrations of students who fail the A/L examinations or who are unable to gain entrance to the universities. Realising that these constitute a politically explosive segment of society, the White Paper's authors hope that these can be absorbed in "technical education."

TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The authors of the White Paper are not unduly concerned over the fact that, for over four decades, various proposals for educational reform have spoken about the need for a system of technical education without any noticeable effect.

The current White Paper however spends a little more detail on this subject. But it is delightfully vague about such matters as whether the expanded technical education system it envisages should be fee-paying or not, and whether it should be managed by the state or the "private sector." The establishment of the second medical school on a fee-paying basis and undertaken by the "private sector" shows, however, where the government's sympathies lie.

In dealing with the content of university education, the White Paper is understandably anxious to shift away from the social sciences, which can cause the capitalist class and the political parties that represent them a good deal of trouble.

Under the guise of making the universities "centres of excellence", the proposals aim at not only restricting admission to this charmed circle but at placing the main emphasis on the production of technocratic specialists- many of whom will, after education at public expense, depart abroad to work in other countries whose salary scales and emoluments are higher than our own.

What will happen to the "technical" education of those who drop out of the schools system at lower rungs is, of course, quite another question. The White Paper hopes that they will receive some sort of "vocational" training, so that they can render better service to their future employers!

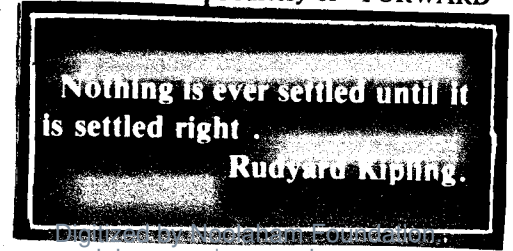
OTHER MATTERS

There are also several other reactionary feature of the White Paper.

Among them are the perpetuation of the injustices to the teachers and school staffs, who remain among the most ill-paid in the country and are treated as political footballs to be kicked from one place to another according to the whims of governmental MPs; the surreptitious attempts to make English the "link" language; the inferior position to which schools within the "cluster" system or in "thinly populated areas" and which do not teach through the medium of the majority language of the area will be reduced; and so on.

The government has announced that the White Paper will be debated in Parliament in early 1982. This makes it imperative that all who oppose its class-bias and discriminatory proposals, and its attack on free education, should close ranks now and step up their efforts to have the White Paper rejected.

Courtesy of "FORWARD"



(Contd. From P. 4)

Many young Tamils were arrested under the Emergency Regulations, the PTA or other special legislation. It detailed allegations of torture and reports that six Tamils had died in the custody of the police. The memorandum was sent to the President, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Justice, asking for the government's comments and observations, and was also sent to the Minister of Trade and Shipping who is the Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee inquiry into the six deaths, the Inspector General of Police, the Military Commander for the Jaffna district and the Deputy Minister of Defence, the officials met by the Amnesty International delegate visiting Sri Lanka in August 1979.

In its letter of 17 September 1980 Amnesty International expressed concern that it had still not received the government's comments on the memorandum submitted in May. On 25 November 1980 Amnesty International discussed the memorandum with the Acting High Commissioner in London. Amnesty International was told that it would receive a full reply from the government. It was informed that the Parliamentary Select Committee, set up to inquire into the allegations that six Tamils had died in the custody of the police after allegedly being arrested in July 1979, was expected to finalize its report in January 1981, and that the report would be published. The bodies of two of the men were found on the morning of their arrest and one died later in the prison hospital. The Jaffna magistrate returned a verdict of homicide in the case of Iyathurai Indrarajah, one of the Tamils who died after his arrest, and found "evidence of police violence." The government denied that the other three, Ramalingam Balendran, Sellathurai Rajeswaran and Sellathurai Parameswaran, had been arrested. Their bodies have not been found although relatives have testified to their arrest and believe they subsequently died in police custody. Amnesty International was informed that the government believed the three men were in hiding afraid of interrogation in connection with criminal charges.

On February 1981 Amnesty International wrote again to the government asking for the report of the Parliamentary Select Committee. It drew the government's attention to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 33/173 of 20 December 1978 requesting governments to undertake speedy and impartial investigations into all cases of "disappeared" people. Amnesty International has not received a reply and knows of no published information about the progress made in the Parliamentary Select Committee's investigations or about its findings. The fate of the three "disappeared" Tamils has not yet been clarified.

(Contd. On. Page 15)

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TCC EXPLAINS

UDI - WHAT NEXT?

By
K. Vaikunthavasan
Convener, T.C.C.

As the storm of controversy which preceded the Declaration of the Tamil Eelam independence on Pongal Day (14th January) is moving away, it becomes necessary to review the whole matter in its true perspective.

As it is now well known, the Declaration was properly made with all solemnity in a very appropriate forum, namely, the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Again appropriately it is the Tamil patriots who took the initiative and made the historic Massachusetts Resolution and Declaration possible in 1979 who have now made the Independence Delaration, supported of course by many others from New York as well as from distant places.

Thillaiampalam Sri Kanthan deserves our continuing support for his grit, determination and exemplary courage in taking the lead by successfully carrying out the Declaration.

Now to the question, What Next?

The Leadership of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) has still a crucial role to play. All types of attacks were made against the (TCC) and its Convener in a desperate effort to prevent them from making the Declaration in London. No one from the time we passed the resolution in from the TCC ever said that the Declaration would be made in London. All along from the time we passed the resolution in August 1980. Indeed we would have been Jubilant if the TULF made the Declaration in Tamil Eelam on the Pongal Day. But, the Leadership became frightened and even tried all tricks to frighten others also by scare stories of a new blood bath etc. As if Tamil genocide plans could become worse than the mad burning down of the prestigious Jaffna Public library with its 97,000 precious books and irreplaceable manuscripts.

When we knew that the Leadership was not going to do it, then we did the next best thing - to make the Declaration in the World Forum itself - the UN. If we had made it public beforehand that the Declaration was to be made in New York and not in London, it is possible that the Sri Lanka Government would have sent its External Affairs Minister Mr. Hamid to see the US Authorities instead of his secret trip to London well before Pongal Day to meet Mrs. Thatcher, the British PM, in an effort to put a stop to the Declaration in London. The TULF Leadership also would have extended its smear compaign against the American Tamils.

We know all the time that Mr. Jayawarden's UNP Government continues to be against the very idea of independence for Tamils and obviously therefore against any step towards Tamil freedom. But what has intrigued us, is Mr. Amirthalingam's shameful attitude, especially after the so-called 6 months "moratorium" no-Eelam talks with Mr. Jayawardene?

Some ask: who gave the Authority to the TCC, in the first place, to decide on such matters as the said Independence Declaration?

We reply:- Who gave the mandate to the TULF Leadership to come to an agreement with Mr. Jayawardene to stop talking about Eelam Independence for 6 months? Then what happens after this 6 month's? General Elections? Tamil MPs to the ancient Kotte Singhala Kingdom?

In Our last issue, readers will recall, we editorially commented and published certain reports in connection with the London based Tamil Co-ordinating Committee's UDI move. At that time, we had no information about Mr. T. Sri Kanthan and some others having presented a UDI petition at the United Nations in New York.

Now, Mr. K. Vaikunthavasan, in his capacity as Convenor of TCC has told our correspondent that the TCC never officially met and decided to indefinitely postpone the announcement of UDI as reported by us in our last issue, and that the only decision that was made at an informal meeting of the TCC held on 12 January 1982 was not to take any action in regard to UDI in London on 14.1.82.

Mr. Vaikunthavasan has since issued a press release with a request to us that it be given publicity. While we have no hesitation to accede to his request, we stand by our report about the decision by the TCC to postpone the UDI announcement having confirmed the correctness of our report with other members of the TCC.

- Editor

The truth is: Questions of authority are raised only when what is to be done is against the interests of those who make the query, at the given time.

Now, when I addressed the General Assembly fo the United Nations in New York (5. 10. 78) and raised for the first time the issue of Tamil Freedom (incidentally also the fate of such Nations as the Basques), no one in the world gave me any authority/mandate.

But because what I did at that time suited the thinking patterns of the TULF Leadership, Mr. Amirthalingam praised me (in his Forword to the booklet - "The Tamil Eelam National and UNO"):- "Tamil Nation owes a debt of gratitude for that master stroke".

That is how the TULF Leader responded then. I have nothing personal against these leaders.

Talking, repeating, "we are for Tamil Eelam" is not going to deceive the Tamil people any more. Because TULF candidates get elected as against the UNP, does not mean that the people endorse and give you the mandate for whatever you do. We must be realistic. At the DDC elections, it is true that the people voted for the TULF. But the crucial point is: As against anti-Tamil UNP, any candidate who says he stands for Tamil freedom is naturally preferred. So that is how the Tamil TULF get the mandate as against the Singhala UNP. Mr. Amirthalingam can't therefore

(Contd. On Page 12)

PETITION PRESENTED AT UN

A delegation from 'Independent Tamil Eelam - 1982' led by Mr. T. Sri Kanthan visited the offices of the United Nations on January 14, 1982 and presented a document entitled "DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FOR THAMIL EELAM."

The delegation comprised of T. Sri Kanthan, R. Shanmugalingam, D. Chanmugam, and T. Sritharan, all living in the United States.

The Original of the Declaration was read before the officials of the United Nations and signed by the delegates in their presence.

The following is the text of the acknowledgment of the Declaration and is signed by Pillar Downing and dated 14 January 1982:

"This afternoon, a delegation of "Independent Tamil Eelam 1982" composed of Mrs. R. Shanmugalingam, Thillaiampalam Srikanthan, Duraisamy Chanmugam and Thillaiampalam Sritharan of Sri Lanka, visited this office and presented a copy (attached) of a petition named "Declaration of Independence for Thamil Eelam."

"The Original of this petition was at the Petitioner's request kept for the use of the Delegation presenting it.

"This office explained that the attached copy will be transmitted for information to the Division of Human Rights."

The January 1982 issue of Tamil Times, reported the postponement of the UDI move by the London based Tamil Co-ordinating Committee. At that time, Tamil Times was not in possession of any information about the presentation of the petition on 14. 1. 82 by the American Tamil Delegation.

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Tamil Nadu Plan Increase Highest In India

The outlay of the 1982-83 Plan of Tamil Nadu will be Rs.711 crores (£355.5 million), Rs.197 crores (£98.5 m) more than the current year's provision. The State's Sixth Plan outlay is Rs.3,150 crores (£1,750 m.).

This was decided in New Delhi at a meeting the Union Planning minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, had with the State finance minister, Mr. V.R. Nedunchezhian, and the electricity minister, Mr. S. Ramachandran.

Mr. Chavan advised the State government to curtail the losses of the State electricity board and improve its resources. The State should pay adequate attention to the slippage in the progress of Centrally-aided projects, and irrigation and power projects he said.

Provision has been made in the Plan for the Cauvery water scheme for Madras city.

A Tamil Nadu government spokesman said that the 1981-82 outlay of Rs.514 crores (£257 m.) had been overfulfilled and the State had implemented a Plan for Rs.601 crores (£320m) mainly due to additional resource mobilisation.

Planning Commission sources said that this was the highest increase in outlay for any State in India.

'MAKE SINHALA & TAMIL OFFICIAL LANGUAGES' Say Bishops

The Catholic Bishops at their recent conference endorsed a resolution urging the government of Sri Lanka to recognise and make both Sinhala and Tamil languages as Official languages of the country with English as a link language. They state that the implementation of this proposal is essential in order to foster racial harmony and national unity.

The Bishops Conference in a statement signed by Bishop Oswald Gomes say that they have been deeply concerned about the crisis facing the two major racial groups which has resulted in the call for a spearate state by some sections of the people.

The statement adds: "If we have to maintain the sacred integrity of our nation in an undivided country, we will have to recognise the fact that we have to foster a spirit of live-and-let-live, a spirit of brotherhood and fraternity without discrimination against anyone on the grounds of race, language or creed.

Noting that "a divided country, to say the least, is a tragedy," the Bishops point out that "the unity of the nation has been so intimate and closely knit that in this country one race simply cannot survive without the other."

RETIRED ENGLISH TEACHERS RECALLED

The Sri Lanka Education Ministry, faced with a lack of qualified teachers in English, is to appoint retired teachers and others qualified to teach English on a contract basis.

It is estimated that around 5,000 more English teachers are needed for the country's 9,500 government schools. The dearth is said to be mainly felt in the rural parts of the country.

INDIAN ENGINEERS FOR MAHAVELI PROJECT

While qualified Sri Lankan engineers are finding it almost impossible to find employment in their own country, and are going abroad in search of employment in the Middle East, Europe, Africa and the US, an agreement between the governments of India and Sri Lanka was recently signed for 30 Indian Engineers to work at Accelerated Mahaveli Development Programme.

JAFFNA BISHOP ON EDUCATION WHITE PAPER AND STATUS OF ENGLISH

The Bishop of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, Rt. Rev. B. Deogupillai has in a memorandum prepared on the recently published White Paper on Education argued that English too should be made an official language of the country.

The Bishop has said, "While we welcome the importance given to English in the white paper through which unity and trust can be achieved as a co-ordinating and international language, our strongest view is that English too should be made an official language. This is the best way, I think, to pull out the hidden knowledge and encourage students in English."

The Bishop also has expressed disappointment that religious education has not been given importance in the White Paper and considered omitting religion from the list of compulsory subjects at GCE O Level) examination as a retrograde step.

NEWS IN BRIEF

* CEMENT PRICE INCREASED: The Cabinet has decided to increase the price of cement. A bag of cement will now cost Rs.69. The price earlier was Rs.64.

* AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT: An expenditure of Rs.1,666. million for the development of Colombo International Airport has been approved in principle by the cabinet. The scheme for the development includes a 20 year master plan for upgrading and expanding the Airport in phases.

* FORTRESS TO BE MUSEUM: Mr. S. Sivanandan, Government Agent for Matara District has announced plans for transforming the Old Dutch Star Fort into a cultural centre and a Ruhuna Museum.

* PLASTIC SURGERY TO BE CLOSED: The Director of Health Services has ordered the closure of the Plastic Surgery Unit at the Colombo South Hospital. This Unit has been functioning for over five years as the second Plastic Surgery Unit in the country. It is learnt that the unit is being closed due to lack of a qualified plastic surgeon to take charge. The previous Surgeon who was in charge of the unit was transfered to the main unit in the Colombo South Unit to be reopened has been turned down by the Department of Health.

* 125,000 DOLLARS FROM US: The Colombo Plan Bureau was presented with a cheque for 125,000 dollars on January 7 by the US Deputy Chief of Mission as the US government's contribution to the Bureau's Drug Advisory Programme for 1982.

* 122,049 LEFT LANKA IN 1981: A total of 122,049 Sri Lankans left the country between January and August 1981, according to Tourist Board figures which were released recently. The average monthly rate of departure for this period was 12,000. The large majority of them is reported to have gone to the Middle East countries.

* EXPORT EARNINGS INCREASE: Export earnings in the first nine months of 1981 showed an increase of nearly Rs.2,400 million over the corresponding period in the previous year.

* CRUDE OIL FROM MALAYSIA: Sri Lanka recently concluded the first ever contract for the purchase of crude oil from a source outside the Middle East. Under this contract, the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation will purchase approximately 240,000 metric tons of crude valued at approximately Rs.1.3 billion during 1982.

Sri Lanka Launches Sugar Project

THE UK-BASED Booker Agriculture International company will participate in a £35m sugar project which expects to meet 20 per cent of Sri Lanka's annual sugar requirements. The local collaborator is Pelawatte Sugar, a subsidiary of Sri Lanka Sugar Corporation which will provide 25 per cent of the equity or 10 per cent of the total cost. Morgan Grenfell will be the financial advisers.

Announcing the deal, the agriculture ministry described the project as the biggest joint venture beteen a public corporation and a foreign firm. The Government will give Pelawatte Sugar 30,000 acres of rain-fed land to set up a sugar factory on 2,500 acres. When it commences operations in 1984 the annual production capacity will be 47,000 tonnes, rising to 70,000 tonnes in two years.

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DOCTORS AND ENGINEERS TO BUY THEIR FREEDOM

Since April 1980 over 200 doc
engineers have resigned their
Sri Lanka to take up employment abroad, mainly in the United States, Gulf States, European and African countries. This exodus commenced with the government's suspension on April 21, 1980 of the Compulsory Service Act which stipulated that professionally qualified personel like doctors and engineers should at least serve five years in the government service.

The Department of Health has been the worst hit by this flight of qualified doctors which averages at least 15 to 20 a month.

The government is reported to be considering re-enforcing the Compulsory Service Act with an ammendment under which a doctor or engineer could buy his freedom from the compulsory 5 year bond on the payment of the cost of his education.

At present it is estimated that it costs the state Rs.80,000. to train a doctor and Rs.45,000 to train an engineer.

The scheme that is being considered by the Sri Lankan government, it is learnt, provides for a qualified person whose services are required in Sri Lanka to buy himself out upon the reimbursement by him of the full cost of his education. A graduated scale is to be laid down for those who have already served the country - a reduction for each year of service. The scheme will in the first instance apply to doctors and the question of engineers will be taken up later.

At present the Department of Health faces a shortage of nearly 1000 doctors wih only 1330 Sri Lankan doctors serving in all the hospitals. The shortage has not been alleviated by the employment of nearly 200 UN sponsored foreign doctors presently employed in Sri Lanka.

Commenting on the large number of doctors quitting the country, a Health Departmental official said that the crux of the issue was that the country simply could not afford to pay the high salaries offered by foreign countries. The payment of professional allowances and the right of private practice could not match the attractive terms obtaining in foreign countries.

ST. JOHN's COLLEGE

Some old students of St. John's College, Jaffna, Sri Lanka are considering the formation of an Associaiton of Old Johnians resident in the UK for essentially social purposes. Those interested please contact:

Sathy :01-641-6079
Satha :01-648-3200
Kanags :01-622-3766

(Contd. From P. 10)

boast that the Tamils are giving him a mandate for everything he does. The mandate was given at the July 1977 General Elections to secure freedom, self-respect and Independence for the Tamils. In the context it was given it meant only one thing:- The attainment of a Sovereign, Independent and Socialist Tamil Eelam. In all earnestness, we ask Mr. Amirthalingam:-

Please tell the Tamils (without verbiage), in point form:- What have you done for the last 4½ years to achieve the goal? Any solid, positive step taken?

As we correctly anticipated the Pongal Declaration has generated so much of political clout both in Ceylon and outside.

The making of the Independence Declaration in New York must now serve to jolt the TULF to summon the National Assembly of TAMIL EELAM, as they promised in 1977.

For nearly 400 years the Eelam Tails have been under foreign domination. Now that a great step towards our freedom has been taken on Pongal Day, let us take stock of the developing situation both in Ceylon and outside and then proceed to the next stage.

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SO IT IS REPORTED

* The Director of Public Prosecutions (UK) prosecutes in only two per cent of complaints of assult by police on members of the public referred to him, Mr. Peter Barnes, the Deputy DPP told the House of Commons Select Committee on Home Affairs. The average number of proseuctions between 1975 and 1979 was 47 out of 2,664 complaints of assault annually. Only 22 of the prosecutions resulted in conviction (TIMES, Feb. 4, 1982).

* M. Marchais, the Secretary General of the French Communist Party said that the party's set back at the elections held last summer happened because the French Communist Party "remained the prisoner of a socialist model unfitted to our country and our age." (TIMES, 4.2.82)

* Many members of ethinc minorities in Britain are worse off than the poorest whites, the Government agreed in a White Paper on racial disadvantage published recently. They live "to a disproportionate extent" in decaying urban areas, with unattractive environments and poor housing, adults experiencing higher levels of unemployment and their children often failing at school. (Guardian).

* The Soviet Consulate in Bombay refused to issue visa to visit the Soviet Union to the venteran Indian Communist leader Mr. S.A. Dange. Mr. Dange, who was expelled last year from the Communist Pary for supporting Indira Gandhi in defiance of party policy, had requested for a visa to visit Moscow on his way to Havana to attend a meeting of the World Federation of Trade Unions. Observers feel that in refusing to issue the visa, the Soviet union not only had snubbed Mr. Dange, but also Mrs. Gandhi. (Guardian).

*Mr. Mieczyslaw Rakowski, the Polish Deputy Prime Minister, has admitted that his present wife Elizabeth is a member of Solidarity and his first wife, Wanda was an activist with the dissident workers' defence committee KOR.

Mr. Rakowski's son, Arthur, defected to Australia last summer after writing a strongly worded letter to his father criticizing his politics.

In an interview with Ms Oriana Fallaci, the Italian freelance journalist, Mr. Rakowski says: "I must admit that I haven't many supporters in my family."

* A group of Iranian students UK organised plans to mark the third anniversary of the overthrow of the Shah with a week of action to protest against torture and mass execution in Iran. The protest which started on 4th February included pickets, a demonstration outside the Iranian Embassy and a hunger strike at the United Nations Information Office. The protest action had the backing of many Labour MPs including Stan Newmens and Stuart Holland. (Guardian).

LETTERS

TT'S CREDIBILITY AT STAKE

We believe that one of the laudable aims of you paper is to disseminate unbiased news and to provide a forum for a broad spectrum of responsible Tamil opinion one that someone wishing to write about the Tamil situation in Sri-Lanka could rely upon.

From this perspective, your giving front page publicity to a letter purported to have come by post from (apparently) anonymous persons claiming to represent some Tamil youth movement takes away much from the credibility of your paper. Your title also misleadingly suggests that this letter containing some dangerous ideological perversions is representative of Tamil youth.

To take the most serious, it is claimed that the achievement of freedom is tied up with the necessary spilling of blood. This is the kind of sentiment that becomes a self fulfilling prophecy, because even if the TULF delivers a workable compromise these people will stand the argument on its head and maintain that what has been achieved is not freedom because there wasn't the sea of blood they were longing to see.

How many of us, who have our friends and loved ones in Sri-Lanka, could sanely wish or contemplate such a possibility? If we Tamils overseas are working for anything worthwhie isn't it to avert such an eventuality? Isn't that why the Tamil Times is in being?

Wexham Park Hospital, Slough. A. Royce. M.R.R. Hoole.

TOO MUCH IMPORTANCE

I read with interest your coverage of the so-called UDI issue and your editorial comment in the January 1982 of Tamil Times. While I agree with the views expressed, I feel that you have given too much importance to an event that did not have any practical significance to the Tamils of Ceylon.

I entirely agree with the views expressed in the article by R. Ganeshan - Non-event with Serious Implications. It is ludicrous to believe that a few Tamils living abroad can even attempt to create a separate state without the support of the major political party of the Tamils, the TULF.

London SE4 S. Kumar

HARSH AND UNFAIR

It is clear that your paper is opposed to a separate state of Eelam. In you past issues, you rightly gave publicity to the discrimination and suppression against the Tamils of Sri Lanka. My view is that only in a separate state can the Tamils live free of this discrimination and oppression.

While R. Ganeshan's article in your last issue sounded logical, does it not appear to him that if the Tamils are to wait until all of them and the TULF are united, by that time we may have lost everything and nothing will remain to fight for. The attack on Mr. K. Vaikunthavasan was a bit too harsh, and therefore unfair.

USA. S.R. Lingam

T.T. A LINK JOURNAL

Congratulations on the publication of Tamil Times. My best wishes and I will pledge my support towards the growth and development of this publication.

I do hope that TT will become an instrument of communication of the Tamil Diaspora. Judging from the quality and nature of the previous issues it well could become the internationa "link journal" of the Tamils. It will have to reflect not only the problems of the worldwide Tamil community, but also its aspirations, failures and successes in a humane and sensitive manner.

Sangam in New York at their meeting in January encouraged its membership to support Tamil Times and its continued publication. I am confident that it will find widespread support in USA, Singapore, Malaysia and Australia.

K. Arul
California.

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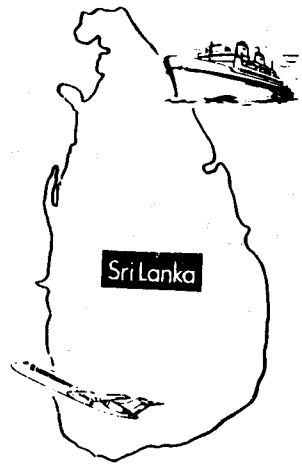

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PRESIDENT PREVENTED FROM VISITING TAMIL AREAS

The Indian President, Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, arrived in Colombo on February 2 on a state visit to Sri Lanka. His previously planned visit to the Island in August 1981 was cancelled by the Indian government due to the eruption of racial violence in Sri Lanka during that month.

On February 4, the Indian President was the chief guest at the Independence day celebrations at the ancient city of Anuradhapura. It was reported that the Indian President's presence attracted more than the usual crowd and that former plantation workers who had been displaced by the 1977 racial violence and now settled in Vavuiya district formed a sizable part of the crowd.

The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), the party which represents in Parliament the majority of the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka and being the second largest party in Parliament, as usual, boycotted the independence Day celebrations. However, Mr. A. Amirthalingam, the leader of the TULF, participated in the banquet held by the government for the Indian president, tc demonstrate that the Tamils were not against his visit to the Island.

During his stay in Sri Lanka, Mr. Reddy was expected to visit Jaffna, the capital city of the northern part of the country where the inhabitants are predominantly Tamil speaking. But his expected visit to Jaffna did not take place.

Knowledgeable political circles say the visit was cancelled because the Jaffna Municipal Council had planned to invite the Indian President to lay the foundation stone for a new wing of the Jaffna Public Library. The Library was burnt down, with its 95,000 volumes, by men in multi on the night of 1 June 1981, just a few days before the District Development Council Elections.

They point out that on 21 January a delegation of the Tamil United Liberation Front had met President J. R. Jayawardena and requested that the Indian President should visit Jaffna. They had recalled that all the Indian Presidents who had visited this country in the past had made it a point to visit Jaffna.

President Jayawardene had readily agreed to the TULF'S request and given them the assurance that the Indian President would be given the opportunity to go to the North on February 4. It would have meant an extension of President Reddy's presence at the Independence Day Celebrations in Anuradapura.

He had informed the TULF leaders who met him that Mr. Reddy would stop over for three quarters of an hour at Jaffna and the Jaffna Municipal Council would be given the opportunity to accord a civic reception to the Indian President.

These sources say that when the Sri Lankan Government learnt that the Jaffna Municipal Council was planning also to invite the Indian President to lay the foundation stone for a new wing of the library to replace the burnt-down one, it had second thoughts about the proposed visit.

Unconfirmed reports doing the rounds in Colombo indicate that officials of the Sri Lanka Foreign office who had earlier asked for sanction from New Delhi for this visit, had later persuaded the New Delhi officials to turn down the proposal.

The Sri Lanka Foreign Office announced in Colombo on the night of 25 January that the Indian President's Jaffna visit had been cancelled.

The official reason given was that it was "too strenuous' to Jaffna by helicopter from Anuradhapura immediately after the Independence Day celebrations on 4 February.

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2. Mrs. Jeya Srinivasan will conduct Sangeetha Upaniyasam (Musical discourse) on the 1st and 4th Sundays of each month starting on 24th January 1982, between 5 and 6 p.m. on Ramayanam and Bhagavatam.
3. Temple Poojah times: Daily at 10.15 a.m. and 8.15 p.m.

DIRECT DIALLING TO SOUTH INDIA

The Sri Lankan Telecommunication Department has commissioned a microwave link between Sri Lanka and India as from January 18. However, direct dialling facilities between Sri Lanka and South Indian cities like Madras, Madurai and Trivandrum will only be possible from end of February. With this development, the very long delays presently experienced in telephoning South Indian cities is expected to be greatly reduced.

The estimated cost of this link, Rs.90 million has been paid for by India. The new microwave facility will also enable direct dialling to Anuradhpura, Vavuniya, Mannar and Jaffna from August this year.

FOOD FESTIVAL BY CBF

The Central British Fund for Tamil Refugees Rehabilitation, a registered charitable organisation, held a Food Festival on 23rd January, 1982 at Lewisham Concert Hall in London.

Nearly 200 people attended the Food Festival where traditional items of food like stringhoppers, pittu, thosai, vadai, mothagam, bonda, soosiyam, murrukku, fried rice and a variety of vegetable and meat dishes were served.

The proceeds of the Festival were for the purpose of discovering "the local institutions representing the interests of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, assess their needs, and then to provide assistance"

(Contd. From P. 9)

Amnesty International also asked the government for details of any proceedings against individual police officers implicated in torture. Amnesty International has not received a reply from the government nor any indication of proceedings being instituted against individual officials.

Although death sentences are known to have been passed since the United National Party (UNP) government assumed office in 1977, Amnesty International understands that no executions have taken place since that date.

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TAMIL TIMES

THE RIGHT TO REBEL

Much as we would like to deviate from the theme of our comments in our last four issues to matters less harrowing but of general importance, like the proposed educations 'reforms' or the remarkable shift in direction of the foreign policy of the Sri Lankan government, we are perforce compelled to deal with events that occur so frequently involving the harassment and discrimination to which the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka are being subjected to without any respite whatsoever.

The horrifying tale of the excesses by the Sri Lanka security forces against the Tamil people appearing elsewhere compels us to aks tha question: When are they going to end? Have the Tamil people to live under conditions of perpetual harassment by the security foreces?

While the purported targets are the so-called terrorists, there is a mass of incontrovertible evidence assembled by individuals and organisations of unimpeachable and unassailable integrity and impartiality to the effect that the Tamil people in general are being made the victims of intolerable harassment, intimidation, assaults, murder, arson and other forms of degrading and humiliating treatment by the security forces.

Because the government did not want, or abdicated its responsibility to resettle and care for those displaced people who became victims of the racist violence unleashed against them in August 1977 and thereafter on many occasions, charitable organisations like the Gandhiyam Movement and Christian and Voluntary institutions engaged themselves in the noble task of establishing resettlemtn and rehabilitation programmes by creating agricultural, horticultural and other small scale projects. This they were able to achieve with sustained dedication and enormous hard work and contributions from the public and other charitable organisations in Sri Lanka and abroad.

Time and again these settlements and projects have been raided and ravaged by the security forces compelling the poor people to flee from the sites. Very often they have been subjected to brutal violence and inhuman treatment. Enormous hardwork and money put into these settlements and projects have been and are being rendered fruitless and the people made destitute.

The government of Sri Lanka may turn a blind eye to the abuses by the security forces, or even actively and happily use them to "keep the bloody Tamils in their place", as one government Minister bluntly put it. The Sinhalese people, who constitute the majority of the population, may feel complacent about the whole situation because it does not directly affect them today. But history is replete with numerous instances of security forces, once used by a government to achieve its partisan political purposes against its "enemies", turning against the same government and the majority of the people to impose a military dictatorship.

We hold the present United National Party - led government of Sri Lanka totally responsible for the present situation. A government must protect and care for all the people over whom it claims authority and a mandate to rule. A government, which fails or neglects to protect and care for the people and allows and probably actively uses its security forces to engage in uncontrolled violence against a section of the people, cannot claim to have any political or moral authority to rule the people or exercise control over them. Possibly it can impose its authority by brute force. But, for how long? The day will arrive wehn the people will decide not to be bound by any authority whatever force with which such authority is sought to be imposed. When that day arrives; it will not be UDI in London or New York. It will be the exercise of a people's inalienable and sovereign right, in alliance with other oppressed and exploited sections of the population, to rebel against a government which has lost its moral right to govern.

THEY SAID IT

° We are not communists and we have no intentions of becoming communists and our [Congress I] programmes are more progressive than theirs.

-Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

° Indira Ghandi is the toughest tigress in Indian politics.

-Trevor Fishlock, Times, London

° I am not alarmed by Mrs. Gandhi's designs to introduce dynastic rule, then why should I be bothered about son [Rajiv] being projected as the heir apparent to the throne?

-Chandra Shekhar, Sunday, India.

° We are so used to talking about corruption in India that we seem to think that corruption is an Indian copyright and patent.

-K.A. Abbas in Blitz, India.

° The whole country is an intensive care unit and my ministers and I are the doctors whose endeavour is to keep the nation's heart beating.

- President J.R. Jayawardene, Sri Lanka News.

° The emotion involved in the sexual context of rape should not be allowed to disturb principles. Members of Parliament should not be allowed to disturb principles. Members of Parliament would do well to remember that rape involves an activity that is normal.

- Nicholas Fairbairn, Ex-Solicitor General for Scotland.

° How can we fight racism or criticise the British for being racist, when some of us are racist ourselves.

- Tariqu Ali in 'Asiaweek'.

° We do not need your Kingdom, all we need is your Crown.

- Joseph Ciosek, Polish Trade Union Minister to Lech Walsea

° The detainees under the Terrorism Act in South Africa were treated in such a way that anyone keeping animals in the same way would be prosecuted for cruelty.

- Mrs. Helen Suuzman, Opposition MP in the South African Parliament.

WORLD THAMIL EELAM CONVENTION

A World Thamil Eelam Convention has been planned for the weekend of July 3 and 4, 1982 at the Holiday Inn, Nanuet, New York, USA.

The general format for the Convention is as follows:

Pre-Convention Cocktail: July 2 (Evening) at the residence of Dr. Panchacharam.

1st Day Convention: Saturday, July 3: a full day session; 8.00 a.m. to 8. p.m. (To be exclusively conducted in Tamil).

2nd Day Convention : Sunday, July 4: (1) A full day programme in English; (2) Cultural Evening - Tamil Dance-Drama "Kannaki" by Padmini Institute of Fine Arts.

The last date for registration of foreign participants will be March 31, 1982. In view of the limited accommodation at the Convention Hall, prospective participants are requested to register early to be assured of a place.

REGISTRATION FEE:

Ceylonese: Medical personnel :, 250 dollars per couple, Non-Medical : 150 dollars per couple, Non-Ceylonese : 80 dollars per couple, Foreign participants : 40 dollars per person, Students and Children over 12: 35 dollars per person, Children under 12 years : Free.

The registration fee is for two days and includes main meals, coffee breaks and cultural event. Cheques to be drawn in favour of the Eelam Tamils Association of America or any member of the Programme Committee.

Further details from: Dr. W.V. Panchacharam, 89 Tennyson Drive, Nauet, NY 10954, USA.

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